

**Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees**  
**Annual Meeting with Board of Selectmen**  
**Nov. 16, 2015**

The Board of Trustees would like to begin our annual report by saying thank you for your support for the funding to restore Monday hours. On Sept. 14, 2015, after a 10-year absence, the Library re-opened on Mondays and the response from the community has been extremely positive. They are very appreciative. As we had anticipated, re-opening on Mondays has spread out visits to the Library so that's it's much easier to find a parking space, and it's also resulted in increased use. Being open on Mondays is especially appreciated by parents of students who are now able to come every day after school and by working people who have limited time to come to the library and appreciate an additional day when they're able to stop by on their way home from work.

In February it will be 18 years since we moved back into the renovated and expanded building. The Library experienced dramatic increases in use in the first decade after the renovation. The rate of increase then stabilized to more manageable levels, but we're happy to report that the volume of activity continues to grow as we successfully adapt to the changing needs and interests of the community. A full page of statistics is included at the end of this report, but we would like to highlight a few. Today there are 13,231 Brooks Free Library cardholders, 9,555 of whom are full-time Harwich residents. Last year 237,876 items were checked out, a 54% increase in the past ten years. We responded to 16,840 reference questions, a 39% increase in the past ten years. Last year we provided 854 programs, which attracted 12,591 attendees.

This year we have expanded outreach efforts related to technology. We are holding monthly technology assistance programs at the Council on Aging and Pine Oaks, recording Tech Talks on Channel 18, and continue to offer Book-A-Librarian appointments for one-on-one technology help, in addition to weekly e-Book Help and Device Advice sessions and monthly technology workshops.

We continue to collaborate with local teachers on projects related to the curriculum and promote recreational reading by hosting field trips to the library and visiting classrooms. In collaboration with the librarian at Harwich Elementary School, we have several new initiatives. The Youth Services Librarian has just begun a new series of book talks in a different Elementary School classrooms every Friday morning, getting students excited about reading, and we've created a story-walk at the Middle School ball fields. The stories are changed frequently and a number of Elementary School teachers are taking advantage of the opportunity to allow the students to stretch their legs and get some fresh air while also focusing on reading.

We are currently hosting a paid intern from the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. Erin Milde, a Brewster resident with sight loss, is working with Assistive Technology Coordinator Carla Burke in our Vision Impaired Technology Assistance at the Library (VITAL) program. The Executive Director of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind was so impressed by our instructional program that he recently visited to learn more about how we were able to successfully establish this innovative program. The Commission is investigating potential funding sources they can use to have us assist them establish similar programs in other locations around the state.

This fall we're hosting an intern from Monomoy High School, providing developmental work experience to a high school senior. We participate in the Senior Tax Work-off Program and usually have several volunteers utilizing this program to reduce their property taxes.



This year, thanks to the efforts of the two co-chairs of the Trustees Building and Grounds Committee, Jeannie Wheeler and JoAnne Brown, and Town Facilities Manager, Sean Libby, we accomplished a major project for any library, the installation of new carpet. With the cooperation of all we successfully planned the installation in a way that minimized the impact on the public. We are proud of the teamwork that enabled us to be open through-out most of the three-week project. The final result is beautiful. The old rippled and threadbare carpet is gone; replaced with carpet tiles in a beautiful teal color that matches the shelving and creates a much warmer and more welcoming environment. The carpet tiles should also improve maintenance and our ability to replace stained or worn areas as needed. We'd like to also extend a special thanks to Maintenance Worker Wes Langway, who Sean assigned to be on-site at the Library full-time for the duration of the installation. It wasn't an easy logistical job but Wes did it with a cheerful manner and positive attitude, and that really helped set the tone and eased staff members' concerns as we got into the installation project.

This year we completed historic preservation assessment of exterior, which was funded by the Community Preservation Committee. The consultants identified \$800,000 in needed work on the exterior of the historic Brooks Block and original bank building. We organized a public presentation by the consultant, inviting all interested committees/departments as well as the general public. The Aug. 27<sup>th</sup> presentation ensured boards, committees and officials had opportunity to hear the presentation first hand. A question-and-answer period followed with great discussion on how to proceed. We have submitted the project for placement on the Capital Plan as well as a request for CPC funding. Other Town officials will be reviewing the recommendations to determine if the work can or should be accomplished in phases, and identifying sources of funds for that work.

As you know, we've also been dealing with a number of electrical repairs this year. Most recently, the library staff returned from Columbus Day weekend to find that the emergency light inverter had failed and the emergency lights and other lighting circuits that pass through the inverter were not working. It took two weeks for the manufacturer to repair the inverter. Although the library could not be open to the public for safety reasons during that time, staff worked diligently to provide modified services, opening a "Library in the Lobby" during daylight hours where patrons could pick up items they'd put on hold. They were also able to select from a small collection of books and movies we set up in the lobby and check those items out. We continued to provide reference services by phone and email, assisting patrons with technology questions, walking them through the process of downloading eBooks and placing requests for items. We then arranged to move our programs to other locations so our story-times, book groups, writers groups, Knit-Lit and other activities could continue. We wish to express thanks to the Harwich Junior Theatre for allowing us to use the HJT Arts Center to run our after-school program the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the closing. Parents were very appreciative of the additional effort we made to ensure their middle-schoolers were safe and well supervised after school. Thanks also to Carolyn Carey at the Community Center for generously providing rooms for various book groups, writers groups, etc., to meet. Thank you also to Ann Steidel and Sandy Robinson in the Town Administrator's office for assisting us using the Library at Town Hall for several meetings and the Griffin Room for a large program on "Aids and Appliances for people with sight loss" with the Mass. Commission Blind on Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup>. Additionally, we thank the Chase and Harwich Port Libraries for giving us space to run our story-times there. We would not have been able to hold the Friday story-time at the Harwich Port Library because of space constraints but the Configuration Dance Studio, which rents the attached hall, generously offered their studio to us, so we'd like to thank them as well. Monomoy School District and Cape Destinations were also fantastic – the schools used Connect-Ed to notify parents of



closings and the change in the location of our after-school program. It was truly great to have such community support to help us continue to provide those services. We are most appreciative.

We would like to again express our appreciation to Facilities Manager Sean Libby. He is extremely professional, aware of priorities and the impact of malfunctions and repairs on operations. He is, however, hampered in his ability to respond by a lack of staffing. We have already seen tremendous improvement in building maintenance since this position has been filled, but in order to fully address the facilities issues, more resources are needed. Additional funding is not the only answer, however. As we've stated previously, often the problem is not funding but trying to find a contractor knowledgeable in complex building systems who is responsive - available in a timely manner and interested in performing the work. Internal assets in the form of Town employees, who are available to respond to priorities and always act in the Town's best interest, are needed. We understand that you recognize this need and would like to lend our support to the effort to fully staff a building maintenance department. The taxpayers will be better served by more responsive action on repairs, to correct problems before they escalate, and by better preventive maintenance to avoid problems in the first place.

We also support consolidation of the building maintenance budgets from the various departments into one consolidated budget under the Facilities Manager beginning in FY17. If this will not be done Town-wide and a phased-in approach is adopted, we ask that consideration be given to consolidating the Library maintenance budget early in the process and that the entire Library maintenance line be consolidated at one time. We are allowed to report a loss in municipal income due to a consolidation of the maintenance function to the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners without ill effects, but phasing it in over several years (i.e., reducing our municipal income by \$10,000 one year, \$15,000 the next year, and so on) may begin to look like attempts to avoid meeting the Municipal Appropriation Requirement. It will be less complicated and easier to track the changes if the Library's funds for maintenance are removed from our budget and consolidated into a central function one time.

Finally we would like to recognize and thank the Friends of the Brooks Free Library who generously give of their time and effort to help us meet the needs of the community. We also benefit from the services of numerous volunteers. Last year 130 individuals volunteered at the Library, performing over 4000 hours of volunteer service. The Chatham-Nauset Lions Club continues to be a great partner, supporting our VITAL program for people with vision loss. We'd also like to thank the Harwich Garden Club for the many hours of hard work maintaining the beautiful garden in the island of our parking lot. Without the help of these organizations and individuals we would be unable to maintain the level of services we provide, so we greatly appreciate their efforts.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees

Mary Warde, Chairman

Joan McCarty, Vice Chairman

William D. Crowell, Treasurer

Kathleen Remillard, Secretary

JoAnne Brown, Co-Chair, Building and Grounds Committee

Jeannie Wheeler, Co-Chair, Building & Grounds Committee

Ann Emerson

## Brooks Free Library Statistics Since Renovation

	Open Hours	Items Checked Out (Physical items, eBooks & eAudio)	Checkouts per Open Hour	Use of Electronic Resources not counted in checkouts	Inter-library Loans	Items in Collection (Physical collection & eBooks)	Number of Cardholders	Harwich Residents w/ Library Card	Reference Questions
FY1997	2025	92285	45.6		4354	38992	8907		2219
FY1998	1937	103910	53.6		6118	42603	9322	<i>not</i>	2472
FY1999	2013	110487	54.9		8630	45199	10562	<i>counted</i>	4360
FY2000	2060	111872	54.3		9624	51984	12313		3955
FY2001	2108	123401	58.5		12275	54684	13540		4613
FY2002	2076	128462	61.9		14677	58439	10867		6053
FY2003	2078	132869	63.9		24363	56833	12094	7811	8955
FY2004	2066	145212	70.3		29264	55784	11661	7838	11416
FY2005	2038	151871	74.5		33236	59565	12308	7574	12263
FY2006	1848	156630	84.8		37849	63041	13108	8043	12126
FY2007	1796	169529	94.4		44147	66393	13370	8289	13866
FY2008	1980	193024	97.5		52435	68620	14298	8457	13183
FY2009	1970	211719	107.5		61304	70454	11936	8682	15035
FY2010	1978	225385	113.9		65829	72620	12606	9014	15471
FY2011	1993	233533	117.2	<i>New item in</i>	71517	76093	12702	8983	15626
FY2012	2004	235597	117.6	<i>state report</i>	70730	81688	12573	8814	15861
FY2013	1981	235941	119.1	<i>for FY2015</i>	68663	85450	12379	8898	16472
FY2014	1940	237565	122.5		66801	90739	12511	8948	16656
FY2015	1922	237876	123.8	24564	62515	93757	13231	9555	16840

	Library Visits	Adult Programs	Adult Program Attendance	Youth Programs	Youth Program Attendance	Children's Programs	Children's Program Attendance	Total Programs	Total Program Attendance
FY1997	64492	5	110			119	3551	124	3661
FY1998	74263	8	1430			119	3419	127	4849
FY1999	64114	51	1076			161	3446	212	4522
FY2000	69654	10	335			172	4769	182	5104
FY2001	75240	80	520			196	6019	276	6539
FY2002	82569	71	673			234	8255	305	8928
FY2003	83627	235	1916	<i>included in</i>	<i>Adult counts</i>	285	8338	520	10254
FY2004	85677	341	2592	<i>until</i>	<i>FY2010</i>	284	6759	625	9351
FY2005	86990	496	2826			249	5939	745	8765
FY2006	82334	602	2608			254	7317	856	9925
FY2007	113584	396	1065			269	7303	665	8368
FY2008	129326	323	2460			286	8306	609	10766
FY2009	141852	534	3776			304	7701	838	11477
FY2010	151008	575	4047	42	273	317	6541	934	10861
FY2011	156535	602	3638	40	244	336	6775	978	10657
FY2012	157849	534	4340	30	519	330	7131	894	11990
FY2013	158081	701	4121	35	242	283	6357	1019	10720
FY2014	159388	572	4396	29	305	305	8493	906	13086
FY2015	159377	532	5097	65	348	257	7146	854	12591